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THE CHAPTER OF ACCIDENTS.

'ALL but the impossible may come to pass at last,' sings the poetess; and every year's experience makes us less inclined to define what is 'impossible.' Moralists blame the careless folk who openly put their trust in the 'Chapter of Accidents;' but when one reflects on what singular events appear to occur 'by chance,' how good and evil fortune often seem to come suddenly, unsought and unexpected, one is inclined to make some excuse for the 'Micawbers who live in hope of 'something turning up.' The Rev. Mr Barham (of *Ingoldsby* fame) relates that it was by an accident that he thought of applying for the canonry he obtained at St Paul's. Going up for the day to London from his Kentish living, he met a friend, who remarked that one of the canonries at the metropolitan cathedral was vacant, that he had written to advise a clerical acquaintance to apply for the appointment, and was now about to post the letter. 'Why should not I apply for the post?' said Mr Barham. His friend immediately tore up the unposted epistle to the suggested candidate. Mr Barham applied for the canonry, and obtained it. Probably, had he met his friend five minutes later, the letter would have been posted, and another applicant received the appointment.

'Casualty has been the mother of more inventions than industry,' writes Fuller, and how often has some apparently accidental circumstance fixed a man's whole after-career! Giotto might have remained a shepherd's boy, Lully a scullion, Lacaille a gendarme like his father, save for the fortunate chance that threw the future artist, musician, astronomer, in the way of patrons who recognised dawning talents.

Novelists are greatly blamed for making so many of their plots turn on odd chances; but it would be difficult to parallel the strange accidents that occur in real life. A writer of short stories once remarked that he had only once utilised real incidents precisely as they took place as the foundation for a narrative, and then the

publisher objected to the tale as 'too palpably improbable.' Afterwards, the writer toned down his facts to the level of fiction.

What incident in a novel could be more extraordinary—more improbable, the reader might say—than the manner in which a suspected 'slaver' was detected in the last century. In 1799 the cutter *Sparrow* brought a brig named the *Nancy* into the harbour at Kingston, Jamaica, under the suspicion that the latter vessel was engaged in the slave-trade. But though many circumstances gave colour to this accusation, no clear proof could be obtained, as the brig had no papers from which such a charge could be substantiated. The court therefore discharged the suspected vessel. But the day before she left the harbour, a man-of-war arrived, bringing some documents which clearly proved the guilt of the *Nancy*. These papers had been obtained in a manner which reads like an incident in one of Jules Verne's works. While cruising off St Domingo, the crew of the man-of-war had amused themselves with fishing for sharks. One monster was captured, and cut up on deck. In its stomach was found a bundle of ship's papers—the very documents which the owner of the *Nancy* had flung overboard when boarded by the *Sparrow*, and doubtless imagined he was rid of for ever. Curiosity led the captain of the man-of-war to clean and examine the papers so strangely brought to light; with the result that he deemed it his duty to lay them before the authorities at the nearest port. The unlucky brig was condemned on this romantically acquired evidence. After this, who shall doubt the story of the marvellously recovered ring of Polycrates?

Probably the most commonplace existence could furnish some curious incidents of what may be called the results of accident—cases in which the chance keeping or breaking of an appointment, a few minutes' delay at a railway station, a casual encounter with a stranger, gave colouring to the whole after-life. How many marriages—and frequently the happiest ones—come about through the chapter of accidents, the precise individuals

who never seemed likely to meet each other coming unexpectedly in contact; and a chance acquaintanceship ripening into affection. An old gentleman was wont to relate that he owed all the happiness of his life to the accident of his future wife having worn a white dress the first time he ever met her, which was at a small musical party. All the other ladies present were attired in gaudy colours, and the simple hue of one young girl's dress attracted his eye. The dress directed his attention to the face, which was a very pleasing one. He obtained an introduction to the lady, found her conversational powers as pleasing as her countenance, asked leave to pursue the acquaintance, and finally married the white-robed damsel—'owing,' as he often remarked, 'nearly forty years' domestic happiness to the accident of a colour.'

Sometimes, unfortunately, the 'accidents' turn in other ways. If we had only refused that invitation to dine with Brown, we should never have made the acquaintance of Smith, who afterwards persuaded us to take shares in so many unlucky 'companies.' If we had gone for our summer holidays to the Lakes, as we first intended, our eldest daughter had never made that unfortunate acquaintance at Clifton which ended in a runaway marriage. If we had not been so eager to secure that Canadian opening for one of the boys, we might have placed him out far more advantageously in Australia, just a month afterwards.

There is a story of a boy who was taken to hear a lecture on anatomy, and who afterwards walked softly, holding his sides, saying 'that now he knew how wonderfully he was packed together inside, he was afraid of shaking something out of its place.'

When one reflects what important consequences may follow trivial actions, timid people might hesitate at doing anything. Opening a pew door, lending an umbrella, directing a stranger, may have as fortunate consequences as followed the traditional 'good child' in the fairy tales, who is always so amply rewarded for similar acts of kindness. Or, on the other hand, slight civilities may prove like Christabel's kindly assistance to Lady Geraldine; when 'the lovely lady' sank at the threshold, and was lifted over it by the simple maiden, she thus assisted an evil spirit to enter her home, which it could not have done without aid.

It is curious, in reading history, to trace the slight accidents which were followed by such a chain of momentous events. If Cromwell and his friends had been allowed to carry out their project of emigration to America—they were on the very eve of embarkation when stopped by the royal commands—the whole history of the Civil War might have remained unwritten. A bishop has chronicled that, had he gained the position of a chorister, he had never afterwards entered the same cathedral as his bishop: his early ambition would have been satisfied with the position of 'singing man;' but, losing this coveted appointment, he turned his attention to study, with the result of his elevation to the episcopal bench.

The chance that threw *The Faery Queen* into the hands of Cowley, the *History of Turkey* into those of Byron, made, by their own accounts,

a 'verse-writer' of the one, and 'gave an Oriental turn' to the works of the other.

The Shetland islanders have to thank the tempests of 1588, which wrecked one of Medina Sidonia's vessels on their shores, for much industrial fame and profit. Tradition runs that it was from the Spanish survivors of the wreck that the Shetlanders learnt the arts of preparing and dyeing the delicate woollen fabrics now well known everywhere. Many a useful invention, many a valuable discovery, has been made public through the Chapter of Accidents.

A SOLDIER AND A GENTLEMAN.*

CHAPTER VI.—AT DAWLISH PLACE.

DAWLISH PLACE was a fine old mansion, of a kind that abounds in the southern counties. It was straggling and low, having only two stories, and it was almost completely covered with ivy. Where the walls were visible it could be seen that they were built of, or at least faced with, flints; and it had quaint high chimneys, which the clustering ivy made to appear like towers; and irregular gables, which made cosy nooks, filled with warm sunshine, bright creeping flowers, and fluttering birds. It was set fair and free on the southern slope of the Surrey downs, with, before it, a sighing plantation of larches to shield it from the south-west weather sweeping up from the Channel; and behind it, in the high distance, a wood of roaring and towering pines, which broke and baffled the northerly and easterly blasts of winter and spring. Between the house and the larch plantation, sloped and undulated, first, a luxurious garden of roses and other bright and scented flowers, and then an expanse of the greenest turf, with here and there a shady tree. Altogether, it looked as sweet, peaceful, and homely a 'seat' as England could show. Ferrers, being country-bred and also something of an artist, had a good eye for rural effects.

'What a jolly place!' he exclaimed as he approached it with Sir William. 'I should like to paint it.'

'Can you paint?' asked Sir William, looking at him with fresh interest.

'Paint? Oh yes; I can paint.'

'Have you any of your things with you?'

'Yes; I have some sketches—mostly war sketches I made in Egypt. I haven't done much with landscape.'

'That's capital,' said Sir William. 'Bring 'em out to-night—will you?—to show our visitors. It's sure to fetch 'em a good deal. A capital idea!' he exclaimed again.

'There's one thing, by the way,' said Ferrers, 'that I must ask you about. Am I still to avoid all conversation with Miss Dawlish?'

'Well,' said Sir William; 'no, not quite. I don't see how you can keep it up. You needn't avoid her, but you needn't seek her out: you know what I mean.'

'I think I do.'

'Don't misunderstand me, Ferrers,' said Sir William, in a burst of affability. 'It's entirely on account of the—a—business I have in view.'

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'So I suppose,' said Ferrers.

The ordeal which Ferrers especially dreaded—sitting down to dinner with a 'lot' of people—came at length, and there had yet appeared no Debrett to sustain him in it. It proved, however—like most other troubles that we fear—worse in anticipation than in experience, though there occurred before it one thing that shook his confidence.

Ferrers had dressed, and reluctantly found his way to the drawing-room. When he entered, he saw that all he expected to meet were there, except Lord Debrett: Aunt Dawlish and Dolly, Mr and Mrs Drew, and his friend Drumly. The 'lots of other people' he had feared meeting, if they were coming, were not yet come.

'Ah, here you are,' said Sir William, avoiding the use of any name. 'Mr Drew and Mr Drumly have been asking me about your doings in Egypt, and I've been telling them about your sketches. Would you mind getting them?'

'Not at all,' said Ferrers, and withdrew.

It was not till he stood in his room with the sketches in his hand that his eye reminded him that they were all signed 'G. F.' What was to be done? He could not obliterate the initials. He must invent some reason for them. He would say—Yes; he was resolved what he would say; and down he went with the portfolio under his arm.

They were much admired by both ladies and gentlemen: they were 'fine,' 'spirited,' 'capital,' and all the rest.

'Is that you,' whispered Dolly, 'on that great long-legged, long-necked camel?'

'Yes; that's me,' said Ferrers.

But Mr Drew was taken up with a spirited representation of a section of the fight at Abu Kru.

'Bless me!' said he. 'I bought a sketch exactly like this the other day at M'Lean's! And with the same initials too!—"G. F." Now, that is droll! Isn't it?'

They all looked at Ferrers—curious, but manifestly unsuspicious; while Sir William chewed his moustache.

'Oh,' laughed Ferrers, maintaining his composure with great resolution, 'that's very likely. Several men wanted copies of the thing, and having plenty of time after we got back to Korti, I did them. It's one of them you must have got. Lady Blencarrow got another, that is now engraved in her husband's book about the expedition.'

'And I paid for it as an original!' exclaimed Drew somewhat ruefully; upon which all laughed—none more heartily than his gorilla-like partner Drumly.

'But why have you signed them all "G. F.," Mr Dawlish?' asked Mrs Drew.

'Well,' said Ferrers, as if embarrassed, 'they are the initials of a nickname my comrades gave me, which I don't think I should utter in—in a drawing-room.'

'Oh,' said Drew and Drumly together; while Sir William laughed and clapped him on the shoulder.

In spite of the success with which he had answered awkward questions, Ferrers was a little anxious: he himself had left at M'Lean's the sketch Drew had bought, and others also. What

if Drew should go and scold M'Lean, and M'Lean should describe the person who had left them? However, he thought, 'Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.'

But his success in that unlooked-for difficulty helped to make him tolerably at ease over dinner. Moreover, Dolly sat opposite him next Mr Drumly; she looked across at Ferrers very pathetically and tenderly, he thought, and as a consequence his heart was suffused with warmth and his head was charged as with the fumes of wine. He drank some wine, of course; but it was not it that went to his head. Drew insisted on talking of Egypt, and Drumly of Health, and Ferrers replied to both sufficiently. He eloquently enlarged on the chances of Egypt under English rule; of its productiveness; of the patient toil of its fellahen. He spoke, he declared, as one who knew something of soils, and the soil of Egypt was as fit now to bear corn and rice to feed all England as—he had been told by men who had read a great deal of that kind of thing—it had fed Rome in its ancient days.

'And you think we ought to hold it?' asked Drew, as if hanging on his answer.

'Certainly,' said Ferrers; and Drew leaned back in his chair satisfied.

'By the way, Sir William,' said Drumly, 'I had no idea your son had such a knowledge of agriculture as he seems to have: soils and crops, grains and roots, he appears to know all about. I was saying to him the other day that he ought to persuade you to let him manage the estate. You don't make so much out of it as might be made—do you?'

'No; I'm afraid I don't,' said Sir William, with a vicious snap. 'But before he takes over the whole estate, perhaps he might try his hand at the management of the Home Farm.'

'A good idea,' said Drumly seriously.

'You don't take him, Drumly,' laughed Drew. 'Sir William means, of course, domestic matters. "Home Farm!" Don't you see?'

'See what?' asked Drumly.

'See that Sir William means that the young man had better set up house first.' And he laughed again.

As for Sir William, he sat silent; he nodded, and 'smiled, and smiled, and'—

Ferrers on his part sat—with a fixed smile—for a second or two in dense incomprehension, and when that passed, in a rush of shame and resentment. The sly, roundabout allusion of Drew was to his possible marriage—his, as William Dawlish! With whom? With whom but his *vis-a-vis*!—with Dolly? Was not that plainly declared by the laughter and pointed looks of Drew and Mrs Drew; by the downcast, blushing face of Dolly herself; and even by the meaning smiles and glances exchanged by the servants in waiting? Was that, then, he asked himself in quick thought, the kernel of Sir William's plot?—the consummation towards which he was urging his carefully laid plans? But he could not really mean him—him, George Ferrers!—to marry Dolly! Speculation, however, on all these points set his brain in a whirl, and he recovered with a voice in his ear.

'Potatoes, sir?'

A servant was at his elbow with a dish of vegetables. He helped himself and continued

his dinner. In spite of the doubts and questions that were surging in upon his attention, he must go on playing his part of a person who was not himself, who was probably very unlike himself in nature if not in person.

Having had his mind thus brusquely turned to consider his situation, he regarded it with more concern and uncertainty than had yet troubled him. He was like a soldier who, going fairly and cheerily along, comes to himself to find that he is in the stronghold of the enemy, and, like the soldier, he began to look warily about him. The glances and smiles of the servants a moment before made him note them: what did they think of him?—whom did they take him for?—for their young master?—and if they did, how long it must be since they had seen him, or else how like each other he and the true Will Dawlish must be, or must have been! That last reflection made his flesh creep. Did he really and truly bear a close resemblance to a dead man? And was it because of that resemblance that Sir William had thought he might readily appear in the dead man's place? Imagine his consternation when, as he was thinking thus, Dolly bent a little towards him, and with a glance at the wall behind him, said: 'I have not seen you look so like your portrait before.'

He turned, and saw an oil-painting of a beardless youth of eighteen or so, slim and presumably tall, with a pensive, frightened, and somewhat worn look. The startling thing, however, was that in the set of the hair and in the general cast of the features—except, perhaps, in the thinner and finer modelling of the nose—the portrait of the youth might be taken for a portrait of him, George Ferrers, when young!

'Yes,' said Sir William, with Delphic duplicity, 'he did look very like that then.'

(To be continued.)

ANTIQUE CABINETS.

It has been said that there is no furniture for a room to compare with books; and to the man of letters what can be pleasanter than to be surrounded by the friends he loves? But to many connoisseurs and lovers of art, with the exception, perhaps, of a painting, there is no more beautiful decoration for a vacant space than an old-fashioned Cabinet. Some feeling of sentiment lingers round a cabinet, as round a chair. We seem to realise something of the love of nature and of all that was beautiful in life, which inspired the artists of the Renaissance in looking at one of those cabinets, matchless in elegance and perfect in detail, with which the despots of Italy in the middle ages loved to surround themselves. How many memories, too, are associated with our own mahogany presses and cabinets, such as are to be met with in many an old farm or manor house, the drawers of which seem yet to keep a faint scent of rose-leaves or lavender. Pieces of furniture like these have perhaps been handed down from father to son for several generations, and seem to form part of the history of the family. Their secret receptacles and drawers can doubtless account for many lost wills and many mislaid sums of money.

Modern cabinet-making is a very different thing from what it was in early days, when the

master with a few workmen superintended each piece of work, which in this way was never far removed from the designer's eye. At the present day, both here and abroad, furniture-making is to a great extent in the hands of large firms, and much subdivision of labour, and consequent loss of unity of design, is the result. Some loss of artistic effect is also due to the use of machinery.

In former times, especially in Italy and France, cabinet-makers were often men of the greatest skill as artists and designers, and their products were marvels of ingenuity and patience, inspired by a love of art which has always characterised the two nations. Italy was for many years foremost in the production of beautiful specimens of the cabinet-maker's art, often in the shape of stately chairs, caskets, or large coffers enriched with carvings, which contained the clothes and valuables of the family. Marquetry-work was employed in Italy in very early times under the name of 'Tarsia,' the word marquetry being derived from the French verb *marqueter*, to checker or inlay. The Tarsia work of the Renaissance was a kind of mosaic in woods. It consisted in representing houses and other buildings in perspective by inlaying pieces of wood of various colours and shapes into panels of walnut-wood. Chair-backs in the reign of Charles I. in England were decorated in this way, as also wainscots and the panels of doors. It was in the sixteenth century more especially—the 'Cinque-cento' period—that Italian cabinet-work reached the greatest excellence. Not only were cabinets made of carved and painted wood with elaborate gilding, but 'Pietra-dura'-work was largely employed. This consisted of inlaying a piece of furniture with hard pebbles, such as agate, lapis-lazuli, and the like. Gradually, this style of decoration, called Florentine mosaic, became so popular that wood was no longer used except as a simple framework. Of the woods used, ebony was perhaps most in favour; and for inlaying, carved ivory and tortoiseshell were frequently employed.

French cabinet-makers were not slow in copying and, in the end, rivalling the productions of the Italian artists. One of the earliest French cabinets was purchased by Francis I., and was of gilt leather with arabesque designs. Inside were two drawers and a little chapel or oratory. In England, coffers were still in use, and had hardly as yet developed into the form of a cabinet. Henry VIII. possessed one of them, as we learn from the following entry in the royal accounts: 'Paid William Grene, the King's coffer-maker, for making of a coffer covered with fustyan of Naples, and being full of drawers and boxes lined with red and greene sarcynet, to put in stones of divers sorts—vi. li. xviii. s. and ii. d.'

Catharine de' Medici possessed as many as seven or eight cabinets, and at this period they began to be much prized in France. One belonging to the French king, Henry IV., had a façade of cedar ornamented with eight Corinthian columns of the same wood, with gilt bases and capitals. In the centre appeared in a recess the equestrian figure of the king treading his enemies under foot. Its height was about six feet eight inches. At the death of the fair Gabrielle d'Estrees, the same king directed her favourite cabinet not to be removed or its treasures of jewellery and nick-nacks disturbed. The princely Mazarin is said to

have possessed as many as seventeen cabinets of ebony.

In Germany as well as France cabinet-making attained a great pitch of excellence, and the decoration of furniture was nowhere more elaborately carried out with the help of the goldsmith and the jeweller. The chief seats of the manufacture were at Nuremberg, Dresden, and especially Augsburg. Among German cabinet-makers none were more famous than Hans Schieferstein, in the middle of the sixteenth century; or, later on, Schwanhardt, Kellerthaler, and Ulrich Baumgartner, the last of whom made a cabinet at Augsburg in 1616 for a Duke of Pomerania on which as many as twenty-five artists were engaged.

Another important piece of furniture in the sixteenth century was the sideboard, called in France *dressoir de salle-à-manger*. There were small cupboards with rows of shelves on the top. The old etiquette of France prescribed five steps or shelves to these sideboards for use during meals for queens, four for duchesses or princesses, three for their children, and so forth.

The cabinets of the seventeenth century were generally architectonic compositions, that is to say, following the outlines of buildings—answering to the chimney-pieces with columns or pilasters on the angles and the panels of the doors, carved with little reliefs representing such virtues as Temperance, Prudence, and the like. They were usually of considerable height, and came in large numbers from Flanders, where Mechlin was a chief seat of the trade. The fronts were carved and put together, and then floated down the canals of the Low Countries to Bruges and Antwerp, whence they were often sent to Harwich and other towns on the east coast of England.

In France, the reign of Louis XIV. was especially notable for the attention paid to all branches of the fine arts, and not least to that of cabinet-making. The powerful Colbert established art schools and factories in various parts of the country, among which that of Gobelins was perhaps the most famous, under the direction of the artist Lebrun, and afterwards of Mignard. Now it was that what is known as Buhl-work, which had attained considerable excellence in Italy in earlier days, was made the fashion in the salons of Paris by André Boulle, a carver in wood, born in 1642. This work consists of a design cut out in gold, silver, brass, or other metals, by means of a very fine saw, and then let in or inlaid into ebony or other woods, or into ivory and tortoiseshell. The designs of Boulle's cabinet fronts were partly borrowed from the outlines of antique Roman altars. His cabinets had frequently pedestal tops, on which were placed those stately clocks with arched frames and embossed gilt faces which are so familiar to us. The king, in recognition of Boulle's skill in artistic designs, entrusted him with the furnishing of the palace of Versailles.

No form of decoration for furniture is more effective than marquetry-work, which consists in the inlaying of slices of rare and costly woods, which are fastened down with glue by means of screw presses made to fit the surface to be covered. Sometimes the woods were shaded by means of hot irons or heated sand, which produced brown or dark yellow tints. Other colours, such as green or blue, are obtained by steeping the wood

in various chemical solutions. Occasionally, finely graduated tints can be produced by splitting and laying slices of the same wood with the grain running in different directions. The herring-bone style of marquetry was practised in very early times, especially in Italy.

Under the later Stuarts, much French furniture was imported into England, though the old Tudor oak lingered on in country-houses. The decoration of our furniture up to the Revolution had been largely due to carvers, such as Grinling Gibbons. In the reign of William III., when Dutch workmen and Dutch furniture found their way into England, marquetry became common. It is at this period that the furnishing of an English mansion may be said to have been completed. The style of decoration which has been lately revived then came into existence. There was a passion for porcelain à la Chinoise, with quantities of small brackets following the outlines of the panels and mantel-pieces, on each of which stood a small cup or jar. Japanned cabinets were much in fashion, on which were placed the monsters, mandarins, and other pieces of Oriental bric-à-brac in which the age delighted.

Mahogany, which is said to have been first used in carpentry in repairing a ship of Sir Walter Raleigh, did not become commonly employed for furniture in England before the middle of the last century. Other woods of a light colour, such as lime, pear, holly, and beech, were much used. Ebony and other exotic woods had come into more general use in Europe from the end of the seventeenth century, the period when the Dutch settled in Ceylon. Marquetry of ebony inlaid with ivory was made in Italy, and the same wood inlaid with mother-of-pearl in Holland.

The last century produced many talented cabinet-makers in France, chief among whom was Riesener, born near Cologne in 1725, and cabinet-maker to Louis XVI. His work was laid out on a ground of tulip or purple wood, and in patterns of lime, pear, and other light-coloured woods delicately varied. Riesener's work bears his name stamped on some part of it, and fetches a very high price. Another cabinet-maker of note was David Roentgen, more commonly called 'David' simply. A piece of furniture which now became very fashionable was the 'commode,' a kind of low cupboard with drawers and a marble top. It was probably introduced in the early years of the eighteenth century; for the Duchess of Orleans—the mother of the Regent—writing in 1718, describes one which had been given as a present to her daughter by the Duchess of Berry. In the drawers were all kinds of articles of apparel then in fashion. The commode took the place of the old chest or coffer with a lid, which was certainly 'incommodious.' About 1720, commodes were much in demand, for in the fire at Boulle's workshop in that year eighteen of them were burnt, some ornamented with marquetry with bronze mounts. One among the many made for Madame de Pompadour in 1750 was 'lacquered with pagodas, ornamented with gilt bronze, and the drawers lined with embroidered satin.' This cost two thousand four hundred livres—a large sum in these days. Another favourite ornament was the 'console' table, which was fixed against the wall,

and made of carved and gilt wood with a marble top.

The general style of the 'Louis Seize' period in furniture consists of mounts or decorative edgings, borders, lockplates, and so on, applied to wood carefully veneered. Sometimes furniture was made up with panels of Chinese lacwork—which caused many Oriental cabinets to be taken to pieces—or with panels of Sèvres porcelain or with porcelain cameos, such as our own Wedgwood produced.

China medallions were much used from the reign of Louis XV., who was the founder of the porcelain manufactories of France. A well-known artist in metal-work applied to the cabinets and other furniture of this period was Gouthière, whose mounts were cast in bronze thickly gilt and carefully chased. His subjects were little Cupids or grotesque figures modelled from nature. Robert Martin, born in 1706, introduced the fine lac polish with which much of the furniture of this age was adorned, and which bears the name of 'Vernis Martin,' though probably enough the secret of the process was derived from Japan, through some of the missionaries who had resided there before the occurrence of the great massacres which closed Japan to all but the Dutch traders. Martin and his brothers painted and polished furniture of all kinds, from carriages and wardrobes to fans and snuff-boxes, frequently employing good miniature painters for the designs of Cupids and shepherdesses with which their work is ornamented.

In our own country, the eighteenth century also produced some well-known cabinet-makers. The brothers Adam, whose relationship is commemorated in the block of buildings erected by them between the Strand and the Thames, and called the Adelphi, excelled not only in architecture, but in designing cabinets, sideboards with elegant urn-shaped knife-boxes, console-tables, and the like. Thomas Chippendale came up to London from Worcestershire in the reign of George I., and established himself as a furniture-maker in St Martin's Lane. He published several works, and his designs became so well known, that much of the mahogany furniture of the last century is loosely called by his name whether made by him or not. Designs showing still greater taste and delicacy were produced by Heppelwhite and Sheraton a quarter of a century later.

During the last half of the century, satinwood was very fashionable for tables, harpsichord cases, and the like, which were often embellished with medallions or cameo ornaments, and borders painted by Cipriani or Angelica Kauffman. The discoveries at Herculaneum and Pompeii gave an impetus to classical ideas as applied to the decoration of furniture; and the French Revolution, followed by the long war, partially destroyed most of the artistic manufactures of France. During the rule of the First Napoleon, a new style, known as the 'Empire,' grew up, and is distinguished by a certain stiffness and affectation of classicism shown in the metal mounts of its veneered mahogany furniture, and in the carvings of the legs and backs of chairs. Some years later, a return was made in France to the style of the seventeenth century. In recent years in our own country we have gone back to the

fashions prevalent during the first half of the last century; while the style most copied in France has been that of the 'Louis Seize' period.

The modern cabinet trade is a very scattered one. In London alone it has been calculated that there are upwards of thirty-three thousand cabinet-makers, living chiefly at Shoreditch and Bethnal Green, at which latter place most of the old weavers' homes are nowadays inhabited by furniture-makers. A great many Polish and German Jews earn their living in this trade, while Italians and French are much employed for work of the higher class. The demand for cheap furniture is responsible for much badly-finished work, in which nailing takes the place of dovetailing, veneer is of the thinnest character, and the glue-pot covers all deficiencies. At the present day, though much furniture of considerable excellence is produced by the well-known firms, we suffer greatly from having no style that can be said to distinguish our country or the age in which we live. The cheapness, too, of modern furniture, while a considerable boon to the poorer classes, is not productive of skilled workmanship; and great competition added to unlovely surroundings have left little room for the taste and love of art for its own sake which once distinguished the cabinet-maker's trade.

THE TROUBLE AT GREAT BUCEPHALUS.

CHAPTER IV.

THE detour occasioned by the 'Eltran outfit' leaving the road to Strapley's Mills so much prolonged the journey that the party were two nights on the plains ere they reached Ophirville, greatly to the terror of little Mrs Boytell and her sister, who were less used to such experiences than were the Eltrons; and not a little also, it must honestly be confessed, to the searing of Boytell himself, who lay awake half the night, listening to the bark of the coyote or prairie wolf, and, what was even worse, watching the movements of objects and shadows which only existed in his own imagination, but which are always to be seen by those who are new to the prairie, who will also hear a host of vague ominous sounds, alike fanciful.

Eltran and Trayle felt more anxiety during the day; and the sight of a solitary Indian horseman would have been to them a hundredfold more alarming than any vague or 'creepy' sights and sounds. Happily, no interruption occurred, and the little cavalcade arrived at Ophirville in safety. Here they soon heard enough to show them what dangers they had escaped. Two wagon trains which followed them had been attacked near Three Water Ford and almost every soul slaughtered. One or two escaped by the swiftness of their horses, and the reports they gave were such as are related of every Indian massacre, but which need not be repeated here.

Yet some farther events arose from this slaughter. The spirit-seller—or one of them, for there were several such at Great Bucephalus—had decided to remove the best of his stock; so one of his wagons was partly laden with brandy and

whisky, objects literally priceless in an Indian's eyes, for he must not buy them, nor dare any one sell them to him. This wagon was captured by the savages, and the debauch which followed can easily be imagined; but it had one unlooked-for result. The infuriated warriors resolved upon then and there attacking Strapley's Mills, which they did with less of the craft, and what in other bodies would be called cowardice, than usually mark Indian approaches. The result was a complete and disastrous defeat. Many of the Indians, both warriors and squaws—for all alike had drunk the fire-water—were killed; no other words are required to express their fate. To be wounded or prisoner meant the same thing—death. The white man in such a contest is as merciless as even his Indian enemy; he feels that chivalry, or even a shred of humanity, would be thrown away upon such brutal adversaries. No evidence can be stronger of this than that white men will often use the hideous scalping-knife as readily as the Indians themselves.

Some great chief had been killed in the attack on the Mills; it was not certain who this was, as his body had been removed; but while some averred it was old Simon himself, others, who professed to be as well informed, declared that it was a white man, one who had been prominent in the attack upon the wagons, and who was, there could be little doubt, Adobe Rube.

To have got rid of either of these men would assuredly be a great benefit to the district; but for all that, a sort of hope was afloat that it was not Rube. It was felt that to be killed in open combat was not the fate which should have been reserved for him; so that, strangely enough, many a man who would have rejoiced in aiding at his death, regretted to hear that he had really gone.

News also came from Great Bucephalus, which showed that the exodus from thence was made none too early. It was attacked on the day after the fight at Strapley's Mills, perhaps by the same party, for the assault was not so fierce or so well sustained, the redskins seeming only half-hearted. However, they burnt the greater part of the town, but did no more, beyond keeping up a kind of desultory siege of the houses in which the few remaining inhabitants had taken refuge; a siege in which only a few casualties occurred, and which only lasted one day. After nightfall, the Indians disappeared, and the unfortunate citizens were at liberty to rescue all that might be saved—it was but little—from the wrecked town.

The loss of so many acquaintances, and the disaster which had fallen upon what had so lately been their home, could not but affect the Eltrons and Phil Trayle—Boytell and the other new arrivals were horrified—but out West the spirits are elastic, and even such a tragedy as this was soon remembered only as those in other communities remember great railway accidents, large fires, and the like.

Eltran soon found a store to suit him. Boytell, as had been proposed, secured a ranch just beyond the city, in which he intended to dispose of his produce. For this, the demand, it was confidently prophesied, would soon be much greater than the present means of supply could meet. This was in accordance with previous

arrangements; but, much to the surprise of the Eltrons, Phil Trayle unexpectedly declared his intention of living on the ranch and sharing in that speculation. Perhaps Mrs Eltran, having keener perception in certain matters, as becomes a woman, was not altogether so much surprised as was her husband. Whatever might have been the latter's opinion at first, he soon became aware that Agatha, his wife's sister, was the great attraction which drew the young fellow to the farm. Had there been a possibility of doubt upon this subject, an early and particularly straightforward declaration of his views, which Phil made to his partner, and had no doubt previously made to the young lady, quite settled the matter. There were not many obstacles likely to be in Phil's way, for all liked him; he was a strapping, good-looking young man, and—a consideration not to be wholly ignored in these prosaic days—was much richer than any of his present friends. So in his case the course of true love ran smoothly enough. We are not concerned with the details; but it may be easily imagined that these were sufficiently absorbing to concentrate the thoughts of the young people on themselves.

Yet some tidings occasionally floated in from Great Bucephalus. An attempt had been made, it appeared, to revive the city; but this had not been successful, and the place only held a handful of inhabitants. Then some reports came in, having reference to Adobe Rube, who was at first declared certainly to have been killed at Strapley's Mills; then, with equal positiveness, it was said that he had been killed and scalped by his Indian allies, some of whom he had shot in a paroxysm of drunken fury. Then, this again was superseded by his supposed identification with one Richard Gately, who had been lynched at a town some two hundred miles distant; an eye-witness was said to have recognised him. Of Minnie nothing was heard; and whichever of the stories, if any, was true, her fate seemed equally pitiable, and the inmates of the Eltran store often spoke of the poor girl.

Ophirville was to be in time to come a great mart and trading centre; at present it fell short of this, and the old struggles had to be renewed by Eltran. Yet it was better than Great Bucephalus; and there really seemed some reason to hope that when the gold-fields were fully developed, the town—and by consequence, the farms—would prosper. The only drawback was that the process might be too tedious for poor Eltran's reduced capital; but he hoped for the best; and meanwhile he and his friends lived peaceably and quietly in the new neighbourhood.

Nevertheless, some little roughness occurred among the miners, and a few trifling disputes arose, at first settled by means of revolver or bowie-knife; but these were afterwards supplemented by the action of Vigilance Committees. The Ophirville gold-fields had much the same stories to tell as have always been told in such places, yet they were so far from being the worst of their kind, that a compliment to the law-abiding citizens who congregated there was expected to form a part, and did form a part, of every public speech delivered in the community.

Chiefly by the patronage of this law-abiding community, Eltran, with his friends Boytell and Trayle, continued to keep afloat; and, justified rather by hope than by actual success, the marriage of the last named with Miss Agatha was fixed for an early date, and Mrs Eltran had arrived at the ranch to give her help till the wedding was over. Agatha, had she been so disposed, could have made a selection from several swains; for eligible brides being scarce in Ophirville, none of the few who did arrive remained there long before the services of the magistrate, the official 'Squire,' were called into requisition.

The day fixed for the wedding was only a week distant, when one morning there rode up to the ranch a man who had come straight from the gold-fields, and he told of an unusually sanguinary affray which had taken place there, and was not likely, he thought, to die out for a day or two; for the miners had determined to drive away or extirpate the whole of a notorious gang of thieves, gamblers, and suspected murderers, who had long been a terror and a nuisance to the law-abiding citizens aforesaid.

Trayle had intended to ride over to the gold-fields that day; but on hearing this story, he faltered in his resolve. He was as fearless a Yankee as ever left the State of New Jersey, and had shown 'real grit' on more than one occasion; nevertheless, when a man is in love and is to be married within a week, he is apt rather to prefer the keeping out of broils than the seeking for them; so it was with Philip Trayle. In lieu of the intended trip, he rode with his friend Boytell to a village—if any villages exist out West—where they would probably do a smaller but safer trade than in the excited gold-fields, and from which they could return on the same night.

So Mrs Boytell, Mrs Eltran, and Agatha were with the children and servants—the helps—left at the ranch; but this was no matter of dread with them. Their men were both armed, and some powerful dogs formed guards almost as formidable; yet, when the quickly closing-in nightfall had come, and all was silence and blackness without, the sudden and fierce baying of the dogs, which announced a strange step, startled the women. One of the men opened a door, and evidently held a brief parley with somebody; then coming to the sitting-room, said that a man, a stranger, wished to see Mrs Eltran, and must see her at once. 'He has got the real grit,' added the speaker; 'and the dogs know it, for the two Texas hounds went for him; but they are frightened of his voice, and have slunk back, and daren't come anigh. Will you come and see him, madam?'

A good deal surprised by this visit, Mrs Eltran nevertheless agreed to see the stranger, who had refused to come in; and so, accompanied by Agatha, she went to the door. The two men, each, almost of course, holding a rifle, remained in sight, although not in hearing.

The night, though dark, was clear, and Mrs Eltran could see the visitor pretty distinctly, and she could also see the two savage hounds, which, as the labourer had said, were watching the man from a distance. Mrs Eltran began

an inquiry as to the occasion of this call; but the stranger interrupted.

'Do you not remember me?' he said.

'N-no,' replied the lady; but her voice faltered as she spoke.

The man noted this, and there was a harsh smile on his features as he continued: 'Yet you think I am considerable like 'Doby Rube, who has been, or who ought to have been, lynched half-a-dozen times. You are right, madam; it is Rube.'

'I know you now!' exclaimed Mrs Eltran. 'Come into the house, and then you can'—

'No,' said the man firmly. 'I am not presentable now. You would see more bruises and blood-stains than would be pleasant. My time, too, is short. I stand on the edge of a precipice while I talk here; but I must confide in you here and your friends. There are not many other persons in all the wide world beside whom I dare trust. I want you to do me a great favour; it is the last I shall ever ask of any one. I want you, Mrs Eltran, to do what you once did for me before—I want you to take and look after my Minnie.'

'I am sure we should all do everything in our power for the child,' said Mrs Eltran; and Agatha added: 'We have all heard of her and her gentle ways; and we all love her, and have grieved for her. My brother has tried in vain to find her: he thought she had gone to another State, or perhaps'—

'Or perhaps, with her father, was dead,' said Rube, finishing the sentence. 'Yet, madam, I have lived within twenty miles of Great Bucephalus all the time. I was one of the leaders of Jorne's band. Have you ever heard of Jorne?'

The frightened repetition of the name, and the woman's involuntary shudder, sufficiently answered the question, for to the account of this the most notorious gang of desperadoes on the frontier were laid half the crimes of the district, crimes always of the cruellest and most sanguinary character; and this was the band to exterminate which the miners had combined.

'But we are played out now,' continued the man; 'we have had a fuss at the gold-washings; the alcalde is killed, and all the county is roused. I reckon most of the band will be cleaned out right away; and so I wish to give my Minnie once more into your charge if you will take her. She shall be no expense to you, although she is the daughter of 'Doby Rube.'

'If we can do anything to help or protect the poor child,' began Mrs Eltran, 'we shall not look for payment, or'—

'My time is too short for argument,' abruptly recommenced Rube. 'Here are the title-papers for a section of land close by Bucephalus. Your friends did not know it; but the Indians did, and I do, that the spot of which this is the centre is the richest gold-bearing earth on this continent; and Minnie will be an heiress by owning half of it; for I wish her guardians to divide it with her. This bag is not for Minnie; it is a present for the three ladies.—You need not hesitate to accept it,' he said, as Mrs Eltran drew back; 'this at anyrate has no taint of blood or crime upon it. Minnie's address is in there, with an order to the woman in whose care she is to give her up.—I have often thought of taking her into the States to school; I wish I had

done so; but it is too late now. I shall never see her blue eyes and fair hair again. I loved her better than you may think possible, and if her mother had lived— Do not let her know, if you can help it,' he said, raising his voice, 'what a bad man her father was; his only merit was in being fond of her.'

'But why need you bid her such a farewell?' urged Mrs Eltran. 'You should leave this district, and take her to school, as you have just said, and then you might live, I hope, a better life. If we gave you shelter until'—

'If you did so,' exclaimed Rube, 'the men whom I can see at the end of this lobby would give me up to the sheriff, or shoot me at once, directly they learned who I was. Besides, madam, I cannot desert my comrades. Indeed, I doubt if I could get away from the territory, even if I tried, for the alarm has been sent out for a hundred miles round. They mean clearing off Jernel's band, and we will all live or die together. The sheriff may be here at any minute, to call out your husband and Philip Trayle; and I should not like to cause a fight in your doors, so I will go. Even from such a wretch as I am, a blessing may be given to my innocent Minnie; and if my good wishes for you and yours can avail, I give them heartily.—Good-bye; you will never see Adobe Rube again.' He turned as he concluded his speech, and in another instant had disappeared in the darkness, the Texas dogs uttering a savage growl in farewell. And his words were fully realised.

Adobe Rube was never again seen by any of the characters who have figured in our story. And excepting for the information he had given that night, it would have been difficult to guess his fate.

Boytell and Trayle when they came home brought ample confirmation of the excitement and indignation caused by the murder of the alcalde, or justice, and how the fiery cross, it might be said, had been sent out. That Jernel's band would be surrounded and no quarter given or taken in the fight, was considered as certain; and it was evident that Trayle, and perhaps even Boytell, had a hankering to join in the sport, the former strongly doubting as to whether a full-blooded white Yankee citizen ought to stay away from such important legal proceedings.

When they heard who had been a visitor during their absence, they could not but rejoice at having missed him, as they had heard so much of the outrages of the gang, that they could scarcely have allowed him to depart. An examination of the articles left by Rube showed that the title to the land was sufficiently correct; and there was, moreover, a kind of will, signed by Rube, but drawn up in a more clerkly hand than the outlaw was likely to boast, giving certain effects to Minnie.

This property, it appeared, was stored at the farmhouse which was the girl's temporary home. The document went on to ask Mr and Mrs Eltran to adopt the child, and gave to them and their friends at the farm a bag of rough uncut jewels—the same, no doubt, that he had now brought.

No time was lost in finding Minnie, who wept with delight on seeing her kind friends again; and on finding that they had come to take her from the unutterably dull and solitary hut which

far up, in some almost pathless hills, was her abiding-place. But ere the little party had returned to Ophirville with their charge, they heard news on the way, which, happily, poor Minnie never learned.

It is not worth while to dilate upon it here; the history and catastrophe was only one out of many frontier examples; but whatever scourges might arise in the future, Jernel's band was gone, 'played out,' as Rube had said; and the law-abiding citizens who had shot or hanged fifteen or sixteen of them in one day, rejoiced, as such peace-lovers should do, while seated under their vines and fig-trees.

There was nothing to surprise in this; but a double surprise was in store for Eltran and his friends. Amidst almost general ridicule, and openly expressed jeers, they took possession of and proceeded to explore the ground at Great Bucephalus, and, almost in the first washings, proof was given that Minnie was indeed an heiress. The child had happily fallen into honourable, kindly hands. She was sent to a good school in Philadelphia, two thousand miles away from the scene of her father's wild career and death; but she believed he had died a miner, after running the usual course of a miner's life. This she believed; and so did her husband, for she married early, as girls generally do in 'the States.'

The other surprise to which reference has been made was the amazing value of the parcel of precious stones which Rube had given to the guardians of his daughter. These consisted not only of the magnificent garnets for which the country was famed, or the beautiful moss agate found there, but of the finest rubies and emeralds also, some of them being of almost priceless value. These had never before been met with there, or within thousands of miles. The Indians perhaps knew where to get them; but they kept the secret, if it were theirs to keep. Be that as it may, the gems were so valuable that on the advice of experts they were sent to Holland for cutting and sale, the proceeds fully securing the prosperity of the 'Eltran outfit,' which of course included Boytell and Trayle. These all held on until Ophirville grew quite the central point of an important district, and until their stores and their farms were famed for a hundred miles round.

PENSIONED LIFE-GUARDSMEN.

PROBABLY many people who have stood admiringly gazing at the massive mounted cuirassiers within the boxes at the Horse Guards, or have seen the glittering escorts of Household Cavalry on duty on some state occasion, may have experienced a passing feeling of curiosity as to what becomes of those sons of Anak after they have retired into civil life. When they have finally doffed the plumed helmet, breastplate, buckskins, and jack-boots, and handed them into the troop-store—from which establishment the articles are issued to juvenile successors—when they receive their discharges, and make tracks out of the barrack gate, attired in the prosaic raiment of ordinary citizens—to what vocations, generally

speaking, do those giants betake themselves? In our article we shall endeavour to throw some light on the subject; but we shall only deal with the veterans who have put in their allotted span of twenty-one years, and not with the hosts of younger life-guardsmen who purchase their discharges, are invalided, or leave at their 'twelve.' In passing, we may mention that the last class is largely absorbed into the police and railway services.

With civil life comes plain attire. Perhaps the non-commissioned officer especially resigns his gorgeous aiguillettes and embroidered tunic and cap with something like a pang. 'Gold-lace has a charm for the fair,' says Mr W. S. Gilbert in *Patience*; therefore, the admiring looks of the gentler sex are probably lost to him for ever. It is sad to think that never again may he be fated to hear, while stalking along the street, arrayed in a coat resplendent with auriferous trimming, Mary Jane's ecstatic exclamation to Susan her companion: 'My eye—what a gorjus, 'andsome man!'

The time-expired trooper, on the other hand, if he be at his ordinary duty, hears—with possibly a fervently ejaculated 'Domino!'—the order 'Leave stables,' the last time for him, with considerable satisfaction. No more for him in this life, Queen's and barrack guards, escorts, levées, drawing-rooms, or field-days, with the accompaniments of endless grooming, polishing, burnishing, and pipeclaying. He receives his 'ticket,' as it is termed in martial slang, disposes of the articles of his cleaning kit to the highest bidders, stands a few pots of beer to his late comrades in the canteen, bids them farewell, and provided with the sinews of war in the shape of 'deferred pay,' hastens from the arena in which he has spent over two decades of his existence to the greater world outside barracks, in order to revel in the delights and comparative irresponsibility of civil life.

About the pensioned Life-guardsmen's future career. Well, though he may have been non-commissioned officer or private, the function of Cerberus constitutes the avocation which he fills fitly and naturally. Who more suited for the post of hall or gate keeper than an erect, burly, florid-faced, heavy-moustached, six-foot veteran? His martial training inclines him to perform his often automatic work with a stern sense of discipline, and a composed dignity that impresses all who come into contact with him. As Cerberus, he is the right man in the right place; he is the model of punctuality, and is always ready when wanted. He is civil in demeanour, but a trifle stand-offish when familiarly addressed by a flip-pant stranger. However, he is a man who, though possessed of a proper sense of his own importance, is—to quote from a popular music-hall ditty—'All right when you know him, but you've got to know him first.'

Bullamy, the haughty but respectful porter of the shady Anglo-Bengalee Disinterested Loan and Life-assurance Association, as described in *Martin Chuzzlewit*, who startled and awed onlookers by bellowing lustily, 'Room for the Chairman of the Board, Gentle MEN,' was scarcely tall enough for an ex-life-guardsmen, though, judging from that worthy's characteristics, he ought to have been one. Perhaps Mr Bullamy, after all, was but

a trumpery imitator, and a weak copy of some quondam cuirassier of his day and generation. But as far as pomposity of style is concerned, Bullamy has a host of ponderous after-types in the ranks of contemporaneous liveried porters, who have been put through the goose-step on the barrack squares of Albany Street, Knights-bridge, or Windsor.

Again, the retired life-guardsmen—usually in this case a man who has worn the chevrons—is greatly in request as the custodian of public parks and garden enclosures. His enormous trained lung-power, erst exercised in his lusty hectoring of recruits on the square, or in bellowed commands to his troop, at this occupation comes in handy. The volume of sound he can emit, while bawling from a distance, at trespassers and evil-doers in the shape of predatory children, seldom fails to strike such juvenile aggressors with awe. Possibly, in an obscure street close at hand, our friend's wife may keep a small general shop. There, when his day's labour is at an end, and the keys are turned in the gate-locks of the horticultural tract he guards with such jealous care, the stern keeper puts off his dignity and his livery at the same time. At intervals during the evening he may actually condescend to serve at the counter, and chat with many dowdy ladies, the helpmates of the horny-handed fraternity, with quite a charming display of affability.

A number of twenty-one years' life-guardsmen become attached to the corps of Commissionaires; but such have to conform to the discipline and usages of that useful body, and call for no special remark. A few pensioners, who have either saved money, or have been fortunate enough to marry wives possessed of a balance in the bank, start public-houses. Needless to say any such hostelry has a magnetic attraction to all the ex-warriors who have belonged to the same corps as the landlord. There they habitually assemble, and chat over old matters regimental.

One or two discharged privates are appointed barracks-sweepers, and in a semi-official capacity accompany their corps from place to place, just as they did while on the active strength. Another small contingent, usually broken-down fogies who have come to grief after leaving, hang about their former comrades, and earn a precarious livelihood by doing any odd job, from getting a private ready for guard, to taking an occasional watch or chain or ring to a pawnshop, or redeeming the same.

The officers are generally willing to recommend a deserving and trustworthy pensioner when he applies for a berth; but, all the same, they are reported seldom to interest themselves in procuring him one. Their servants, however, are usually well provided for. Such functionaries are frequently relegated to the ancestral homes of those patrician commissioned gentlemen, where they figure as valets, footmen, and so forth. Ex-servants who have been lucky enough to wed ladies endowed with genius in the direction of 'managing,' have been actually known to attain the social altitude of Bloomsbury boarding-house keepers.

Many of the smartest of the non-commissioned officers, in common with men holding similar ranks in other cavalry corps, are appointed to

troops of provincial yeomanry regiments. One or two others, obtaining the posts by extra-special influence, don the Tudor costume, and as Yeomen of the Guard do duty at the Tower and on State ceremonials.

The farriers, as a rule, stick to their particular profession, and, when discharged, start forges all over London. The bandsmen, who, as is well known, are picked and highly-trained musicians, on retirement carry on the engagements in the orchestras of theatres, music-halls, &c., that they may have held throughout their regimental careers. At times the bands of their old corps may enter upon an important provincial engagement, when, for various reasons, the strength requires to be temporarily augmented. Then, by special Horse Guards authority, the services of those pensioned musicians were requisitioned, and again they attired themselves in the uniforms of their former regiments. A recently issued order, however, has withdrawn this privilege, which may have the effect of preventing the bands of the Household brigade from accepting provincial engagements.

The commanding officers of the corps of Household Cavalry possess the power of summarily, and without the preliminary of a court-martial, disposing of a ne'er-do-well by simply having his discharge put in his hand, which is endorsed with the somewhat indefinite statement, 'Services no longer required,' and ordering him to be walked out of the barrack gate. Excepting troopers who have contracted chronic bibulous habits, a good deal is condoned in respect of offences purely military. But the weeding-out process is rigorously resorted to should a man get himself into any trouble with the civil authorities outside, in a way likely to affect the high character of his corps. Then off he is packed with but scant ceremony. Thus each man who has put in his twenty-one years must of necessity have been of steady habits, and such characteristics he generally imports into civil life. A few men after discharge may go to the bad; but it is safe to say that a good ninety-five per cent. of those pensioned cuirassiers are men of unexceptionable respectability. Several—usually men of advanced age, who are incapacitated for work, and have no income but their meagre pensions—wisely seek refuge within the sheltering walls of Chelsea Royal Military Hospital.

The average ex-life-guardsman retains a fondness for porter, a humble beverage, that to him conjures up many reminiscences of his rollicky experiences of the canteen. He usually imbibes in moderation, however, unless when he meets an old comrade, or indulges in an excusable outbreak on pension days. Though not an active politician, he, like most retired warriors, has a distinct leaning towards Conservatism. For him former associations possess a perennial charm. If opportunity permits, he loves to witness any State procession at which his old regiment is on duty. His position as an irresponsible onlooker is unique and delightful, and when the affair is over, he turns away with presumably the satisfactory knowledge that he is exempted from a good four or five hours' grooming and cleaning.

The majority of pensioned cuirassiers—though originally they may have been recruited direct

for the Household Cavalry from all parts of the three kingdoms, or have been transferred from marching regiments, as many men are who are physically eligible—remain in London. Probably in the metropolis they have more immediate chances of employment on being discharged. Again, being mostly hampered with families, difficulties are thus thrown in the way of going afield to seek their fortunes.

There is but little intercourse between ex-members of the different regiments in the brigade of Household Cavalry, possibly because they saw comparatively little of each other during their term of service. But the men of any one corps are very gregarious. If they are too far apart to forgather in any particular inn, they are sure to meet in the canteen some time or other when the old regiment is quartered in London. The parchment certificate of discharge also places non-commissioned officers and troopers on a level, socially speaking. Thus, close friendships are often subsequently formed between the pensioned representatives of those grades, which, by reason of the restrictions necessarily imposed by military discipline, had been made impossible while they were on the active strength.

THE MONTH:

SCIENCE AND ARTS.

THE Zoological Society of London has received from Professor Stirling, of the university of Adelaide, a water-colour drawing of the newly discovered Marsupial Mole ('*Notoryctes Typhlops*'), and the picture is on view at the Society's library. Only two or three of these curious animals have as yet been found, for they seem to be confined to one district, are extremely difficult to track, and can only be found after rain, when the sand is moist enough to retain the markings of their feet. Very few white men have ever seen this strange creature, whose business in life seems to be perpetual burrowing. Professor Stirling says that 'in penetrating the soil, free use as a borer is made of the conical snout with its horny projecting shield, and the powerful scoop-like claws (fore) are also early brought into play. As it disappears from sight, the hind limbs as well are used to throw the sand backwards, which falls in again behind it as it goes, so that no permanent tunnel is left to mark its course.' The drawing of this animal, the discovery of which is one of the most important made in recent zoology, is to be brought before a meeting of the Society later in the year.

The Electrical Exhibition, to be opened at the Crystal Palace in January next, promises to be the most complete display of its kind which has ever been known. It will be International in character, and will include in its sections everything which has the remotest connection with electrical science. A most complete collection of instruments illustrating the history of the electric telegraph from its first inception to present times will be shown by the Government,

and this part of the Exhibition will be arranged under the direction of Mr W. H. Preece.

At the 'World's Fair' at Chicago it has been decided that the various buildings shall be decorated with a composition known as 'Staff.' This is a mixture of plaster of Paris, alumina, dextrine, and glycerine, is of French origin, and was first used at the Paris Exhibition of 1878. The various constituents are mixed, like ordinary plaster, with cold water and allowed to harden in moulds. The composition is quite waterproof, and to correct any tendency to brittleness the castings are backed by some textile material such as coarse canvas. The colour of the material is dirty white, but it can of course be tinted to any hue that may be required.

Some interesting particulars regarding the ostrich are contained in a paper recently read before the Royal Society of Tasmania by Mr James Andrew. During the nesting season, the male bird is so pugnacious that it is dangerous to go anywhere near him. His method of attack is by kicking; and as his powerful foot is armed with a formidable nail, he can do great damage by bringing it down upon his opponent. A blow with the flat of the foot is terrible enough; but the nail has a ripping action which is far worse. Instances are adduced where a man has been killed by one blow from this awful foot; and in another case a horse's back was broken by a blow aimed at its rider. When a man is attacked, it is useless to seek safety in flight, for the bird can overtake him in an instant. The only way is to lie down flat on the ground and take the punishment until chance offers an opportunity of escape. If the bird is seized by the neck and his head tightly held down, he is rendered comparatively powerless.

An American paper recently published an interesting article on 'The Colour of Snakes as affected by Climatic Influences.' From observations made, it would seem that the colour of these reptiles will always partake more or less of the natural tints around them. Thus, when the soil is of a reddish colour, the diamond rattlesnake is reddish in his markings, and of far lighter hue generally than the same snake found in the dark woods of Demerara. The puff adder gives us another example of colours coinciding with local tints, for when this deadly creature finds its home upon the lower lands near the sea, it is pale and dirty-looking. Not so, however, when it comes from the higher ground, among more brilliant surroundings, for here he appears in the brightest yellow and black which can be conceived. The pattern upon the skin of each species seems to be preserved, and it is the colouring only which varies with locality.

Hydrofluoric acid is the agent commonly used for etching glass, and for giving it that ornamental frosted appearance which is so commonly seen in the windows of offices and public buildings. But the acid has a most deleterious effect upon the health of the workmen employed in glass factories, unless special precautions be taken to carry away its fumes. The harmful effects produced by the acid vapours are exhibited in attacks of vertigo, malaise, and dyspepsia. At certain works under the supervision of the factory inspectors of Grätz, the workmen have repeatedly

complained of illness; and inquiry proved that the precautions taken against inhalation of the acid were not sufficient. Each man worked with india-rubber gloves, and with hands inserted in a box furnished with a pipe to carry off the noxious fumes; but the heavy gas was found to collect in the workrooms in spite of this device for its extermination.

In the year 1857, the French engineer, M. Jus, demonstrated that that portion of the Sahara Desert included within the area of French Algeria contained large underground supplies of water; and the number of wells bored since that time in the departments of Algiers, Oran, and Constantine amounts to more than thirteen thousand. These wells vary from one hundred to four hundred feet in depth; and the pressure of the water forces it a couple of feet above the surface of the ground. It is then led into ditches, and is carried in this way to the vineyards, date-trees, and wheat-fields. No fewer than twelve million acres of barren land have been made fruitful in this way, an enterprise representing perhaps the most remarkable example of irrigation by means of artesian wells which can anywhere be found. Algeria owes to this method of cultivation that it is becoming a most important wine-producing country, as may be gauged from the fact that it sent to France in 1886 ten and a half millions of gallons.

It is an unavoidable feature of war-ship construction that a new design quickly becomes obsolete, and as a matter of course there are always a number of ships on hand which in the case of war would be quite eclipsed by more modern patterns. Captain Cressy, R.N., has made a suggestion to the Admiralty regarding these vessels, which seems to be worthy of consideration. He proposes that, instead of breaking up these iron-plated monsters when they are condemned as being unfit for further service, they should be utilised in the construction of breakwaters. The vessels could be filled with heavy concrete or other material at the point where the breakwater was required, and sunk so as to form a base around which further construction could be carried out. We presume that the acceptance of the proposal would be determined by the value of the materials comprised in a ship of this type.

A simple method of cleaning plaster busts and statues has lately been published; but it is applicable only in those cases where the plaster has not been painted, waxed, or treated with any other impervious coating. The article is inverted and filled with water, which gradually percolates through the plaster, and carries all dirt from its pores, the action being helped by washing the surface with water and a soft brush. The plaster is soon restored to its original whiteness, but to secure this result, the water employed must be quite free from iron.

There have been published within the last few years numerous alleged cures for consumption, and the last one—Koch's tuberculosis remedy—has given rise to an immense amount of controversy. But prevention is always better than cure, and those who unfortunately feel an active interest in the subject, either on their own account or because of some near one, will do well to study the remarks of Mr G. W. Humbleton at the

recent meeting of the British Association. This gentleman pointed out that this disease of civilised life was produced by causes which tended to reduce the breathing capacity below a certain level. To avoid it, the work which the individual had to perform should be carried on under conditions favourable to the body. Every effort should be made to develop the lungs, both by athletics and active exercise in the open air. Occupations which involved stooping and cramped positions should be avoided, and corsets and tightly-fitting garments discarded. Close and badly-ventilated rooms, especially sleeping apartments, are pronounced against; wool should be worn next the skin; the body should be held erect; and deep inspirations in breathing should be taken through the nose. This is valuable advice; but it is difficult to persuade others to avail themselves of it. Among many classes, the fresh air of heaven is too often shut out as if it were a dangerous poison.

An American physician advocates the vapour of vinegar as a valuable remedy in croup. The liquid is put into a pan, placed on heated bricks or irons, so that the air of the sick-room becomes speedily saturated with it. This seems to be a partial revival of old ideas, for the vinaigrette used to be commonly carried by ladies as a remedy against faintness. But it may possibly be serviceable in the new way indicated.

'The harmless necessary cat' is just now in rather bad odour with a member of the Zoological Society of France, who has recently called attention to the serious diminution of birds in that country through the depredations principally of pussy. Of course, boys must be credited with a great deal of the mischief; and the hedgehog, squirrel, dormouse, and other natural assailants of birds must also receive their fair share of blame. But the cat is the worst offender of all. On a certain estate where thirty-seven birds' nests were watched, only eight produced a brood of young, fourteen of the twenty-nine destroyed falling to the hunting propensities of the cat. A tax on cats would perhaps have the effect of weeding out a few of these marauders.

Those with only an elementary knowledge of chemistry are aware that there are more than forty recognised metals. A large number of these can only be regarded as curiosities of the laboratory, for there is no specific use for them; indeed, they are found in nature in such minute quantities that some of them are far more precious than gold. Among these rare metals is wolfram or tungsten, a use for which has been found since guns of enormous calibre came into vogue. It is unfortunately a matter of common knowledge that these guns are liable to fracture; but it has been found that by adding a very small percentage of tungsten to the fine steel of which the inner lining is made, an elasticity is conferred upon the metal which it did not possess before, so that it will bear alternate expansion and contraction under heavy charges without giving way. Tungsten is a white metal of very brittle quality, and its specific gravity is only a trifle less than that of gold.

It is reported that the astronomers at the Lick Observatory, who have at their disposal the largest telescope in the world, have detected certain appearances on the moon's surface which have

never been seen before. A luminous spot, for example, which appears on one of the lunar mountains has an exact resemblance to snow; yet the orb has always been regarded as a dead world without atmosphere, and snow would under such conditions be impossible.

A preparation of eucalyptus, consisting of a mixture of certain antiseptics in the essential oil of the plant, and known as 'Tucker's Eucalyptus Disinfectant,' is highly spoken of by a medical writer in *Nature*. He says that for the past two years he has used this preparation in all cases of scarlet fever and diphtheria, rubbing the disinfectant over the whole body twice, and then once a day for ten days, and has not had one case of infection. He also gives the experiences of other doctors in confirmation of his own, and tells how in one instance a child having scarlet fever and treated in this way failed to infect two healthy children who for eight days occupied the same room with the little patient. The two diseases named are so justly dreaded because of their fatal nature, and also because of the mischief often left in their train, that we have no hesitation in giving publicity to this statement.

The Antirabic Institute at Padua is, as its name implies, an establishment for treating those who have been bitten by rabid animals according to the method introduced by M. Pasteur. There have been so many conflicting statements made as to the efficacy of M. Pasteur's system, that some interest is attached to the Report for 1890, which has recently been issued by the Institute in question. It seems that during a period of seven months the total number of patients treated numbered forty-nine. Twenty-three of these unfortunates were the victims of animals proved, by experimental inoculation, to be rabid; eighteen had been bitten by animals certified by veterinary surgeons to be so; while the actual condition of the animals which originated the remaining eight cases could not be traced. Not a single death occurred among the forty-nine patients; and there was every reason to suppose that they had, under treatment, become perfectly well.

More than once have we adverted to the pneumatic system of propelling dynamite shells, which, originally invented by Zolinski, has been adopted in principle by others. A dynamite torpedo-thrower of this character is shortly to be erected on Dale Point in Milford Haven. The entrance to this natural harbour has a breadth of two miles; and the pneumatic gun can be laid so accurately that it will be possible to drop a charge of three hundred pounds of dynamite upon any hostile ship which comes within range. This terrible weapon has already been tried at Shoeburyness, when it was found that shot after shot could be dropped into a predetermined area covering only two or three yards. This reversion to the old mortar system of attack is both curious and interesting.

The beautiful colour known as Alexandrian Blue, which was commonly used by the Romans in painting their frescoes, has proved to be what drapers call a 'fast colour,' for it has in many cases stood with its lustre undimmed for a couple of thousand years. In many of the Pompeian houses, for instance, this colour is found in the mural paintings. Many attempts have been made,

after analysing the colour scraped from these walls, to reproduce it synthetically; and at last a French chemist, it is said, has succeeded in making it from its constituents, principally silicate of copper and carbonate of lime. The new manufacture is presently to be introduced as an article of commerce.

A novel kind of circular saw has been patented by Mr J. E. Bott, and introduced commercially by the Planing and Saw Company of Manchester. The saw differs from one of the ordinary kind in having its teeth alternated with planing-knives, so that as a plank is sawn asunder, the two new surfaces, instead of being left rough and scored by saw-cuts, are accurately levelled as if by a smoothing-plane. The work of a separate planing-machine is thus dispensed with, and the wood is delivered ready for polishing, after being subjected to the usual rubbing with glass-paper.

The remarkable way in which both dogs and cats will find their way home from long distances has formed the subject of many an anecdote, and most persons can recall instances of this remarkable faculty on the part of domestic animals which have come under their own observation. It is not generally known that the fox also possesses this power of finding its way back to its usual haunts. But a well-authenticated instance of the kind is quoted by Mr Harting in an interesting article in the *Zoologist*. He tells of a fox which returned three several times to its 'earth' from a place seventy miles distant. The animal was caught in Yorkshire, and sent to be hunted in Lancashire, the catcher having marked it in the ear, so that there was no doubt as to its identity.

Mr Galton's Anthropometric Laboratory, which was visited by so many persons during the Health Exhibition in London, has now found a new home in South Kensington Museum, the old site having been required for the Imperial Institute. Its work, without leading to any remarkable result, has been extremely useful; but it is curious to learn that a false standard is liable to be raised, which may in the future embarrass those who pass candidates for the public service, in consequence of the results of what may be called human vanity. Those who are proud of their strength and general physique are rather foud of testing their powers, and obtaining official records of the same, while narrow-chested and weaker mortals do not care to have a demonstration made of their feeble efforts to come up to the average. Hence a misleading standard is likely to be arrived at, which militates against that accuracy which Mr Galton endeavours to secure.

At the late Congress of Hygiene and Demography, an interesting paper was read by Dr W. Anderson on the Revolving Purifier for treatment of potable waters by means of metallic iron. This apparatus, invented by Dr Anderson, has been in use for some years, so that he was able to deal with the results gained by the use of the contrivance in different localities. The Purifier consists of a revolving cylinder, partly filled with scraps of iron, which, by constant attrition, keep perfectly clean. The water to be purified is passed through this cylinder, and in the process, takes up from one-tenth to one-fifth of a grain of the metal per gallon. This iron is afterwards got

rid of in a settling reservoir, or by rapid filtration through sand, and with it are eliminated organic matter and other impurities which may originally have been present in the water.

THE INDIAN CROW.

HE wears the outward semblance of the common jackdaw, and his disposition is somewhat similar; but the most abandoned jackdaw that ever flew is a model of probity and virtue by comparison with the gray-headed reprobate we call a Crow. The English bird has defective ideas regarding ownership, and is admitted on all hands to be a noisy and undesirable neighbour; but his shortcomings and faults are as nothing in the eyes of him whose fate it has been to make acquaintance with the Indian Crow.

A kleptomaniac by birth, that crow makes theft his profession from the hour he leaves the untidy nest in the mango tree, wherein his parents reared him on stolen goods. From the hour he can use his wings he pursues a career of audacious wickedness which would shock a jackdaw into honesty. His character is blacker than his wing. He lives by peculation and larceny, purloining from man and beast alike. He revels in cannibalism, stealing the fledglings of other birds, and tearing their limb from limb to devour while the blood runs warm. He has not a friend in the world; every hand, every tooth, and every beak is against him, and he glories in it; comporting himself with a brazen sprightliness that the guileless robin would blush to see. In the boundless jungles he might dwell in peace, and earn an honest livelihood, so he does not live there. He prefers a life of dissipation in town, and rears his family in the trees lining the busy bazaar, conscious that the mild Hindu will not only leave him undisturbed, but find, unintentionally, a living for him. He never strays far from the haunts of mankind; the poor black man's rice and chupatti are sweeter to him than the growing fruit and grain; and he does not disdain to swindle the hungry pariah dog out of his inheritance of garbage. He is omnivorous and insatiable, combining the appetite of the vulture with the tastes of the ostrich: nothing comes amiss to him; one minute he steals the toast off your breakfast table, and the next is one of a party discussing a dead rat.

Look at him as he perches there on the veranda railing. His legs are bent, his wings are half open, and his body thrust forward in readiness to take the instant flight for which his uneasy conscience warns him always to be prepared. He carries his head on one side, and his beak agape; his wicked eye is restlessly rolling; he looks exactly what we know him to be—to wit, a bad, bold, evilly-disposed bird. He is on the railing for no good purpose; he never went anywhere yet on an honourable errand, and he never will. He is waiting until your back is turned to drop noiselessly in at the open window, thence feloniously to steal and carry away your pen, shirt studs, money, or penknife; no matter what, so long as it is something loose and portable, which you want, and he does not. He purloins from sheer superfluity of naughtiness, for in nine cases out of ten he leaves his booty on the most inaccessible part of the

bungalow roof, after subjecting it to a cursory examination; and in the tenth case he drops it down the well, pretending to do so by accident. As soon as he has thus disposed of your property, he comes back to the veranda for the express purpose of hearing you scold your 'boy' for losing an article he never touched.

The black servant hates the crow with a deep undying hate not unmixed with awe, for he regards him as the abiding-place of an evil spirit. Cynical persons of broad views have been known to say that dishonest nokkurs become crows when they die; and certainly the bird's close intimacy with the minutiae of Anglo-Indian housekeeping gives the theory plausibility. This, by the way. I was about to refer to the boy's practice of saddling his own misdoings upon the crow. Anything bright and shining, like a silver spoon or gold stud, has an irresistible attraction for the crow, and the boy knows it; indeed, what a native servant does not know is not worth learning. Hence, when such an article mysteriously disappears, as things do disappear in the East, the boy always 'saw crow done come took it.' A crow once took away four of my table-spoons in this fashion; but very kindly brought them back and laid them in a drawer of the table in the back veranda, when he discovered that they were electroplate of inferior manufacture. I mention this as an exceptional case. Both the khitmugar and mesalchee recollected seeing the crow carry off those spoons, but could not remember seeing them brought back, though they agreed with me that it must have taken the bird some time to open the drawer and shut it again. Needless to say, the crow never goes to the trouble of restoring anything that is convertible into annas and pice in the bazaar.

But inasmuch as the hard-hearted European sceptic insists on holding his poor black servant responsible for the crow's misdeeds, and docks his monthly wages in accordance with this principle, native ingenuity is ever on the rack to devise means of circumventing the enemy. The bird's cunning is so extraordinary that no ordinary trap deceives him, and the boy has recourse to all kinds of dodges to accomplish the desired end. Sometimes he makes a few strong paper cones, and smearing them inside with birdlime, drops a morsel of juicy raw meat into each, and throws the snares down on the rubbish heap behind the cookhouse where crows do mostly congregate. Down comes a crow to investigate; he turns over a cone thoughtfully, and applies his eye to the interior. Meat, by all that's edible! In goes his beak, and he is securely 'bonneted.' Before he can claw off the encumbrance, the wily native is upon him, and he is borne struggling and squarking into the smoky cookhouse. There the boy squats on the floor and holds him tight, while the bobachee fastens a cork upon his nose with a bit of wire from a soda-water bottle; and thus adorned, he is released, to wear a badge of shame for the rest of his days. Being caught by the superior craft of man is the only thing a crow is ashamed of. But he does not live long if there happen to be a 'griffin' in the district; the new arrival recognises in the strange excrescence the distinctive mark of a new and curious species, hitherto unknown to natural history; and, fired

with scientific zeal, shoots him accordingly. It is an expensive mistake—for the crow.

But so admirably is the crow 'Intelligence Department' organised, that the most subtly designed trap soon fails to delude. The corked example, for instance, goes about, a melancholy warning against the allurements of paper cones, and tells every fellow he meets how he came by the decoration. Thenceforth, those instruments are doomed to failure and derision; you may spend a lifetime making paper cones and charging them with the choicest dainties, and the crows will come and sit round, squarking sarcastic remarks. If you leave the snares long enough, the birds will calmly set to work and take out the bait from the apex end in safety; but no appeal to the crow palate will induce them to fall in with your scheme.

The intelligence of an elderly crow is exasperatingly human. Point your gun at him and he seems to vanish into thin air; in reality, he has dived behind the nearest cover like a flash of black lightning. Threaten him with the unmounted barrels, and without stirring a feather, he croaks back a jeering 'squark.' He regards a hand-thrown missile with utter contempt; waiting until it is fairly launched, he calculates its course with mathematical precision, steps aside to let it pass, and resumes his old perch, yawning.

Crows are intensely clannish. If you are consumed with a morbid curiosity to ascertain how many reside within a radius of five miles round your bungalow; or if you conceive a philanthropic wish to relieve your neighbours of their share of the crow population, it is very easy, once you have caught a member of the race. That, I admit, is difficult. But assuming that you have succeeded, all you need do is, tie a red rag to his leg and let him go. In three minutes all the crows in the district have heard of the outrage, and the air over your compound is darkened by thousands of angrily protesting birds—all crows. Other feathered creatures ignore the carryings-on of this disreputable family. It is an indignation meeting, called to condemn you; and the crows, flying just out of gunshot, hurl down unanimous and deafening votes of censure with all the power of their lungs. If you appear outside for a moment, the uproar becomes positively bewildering; all you can do is to remain quiet indoors and wait. Presently there is a lull; this denotes that a committee has been appointed to examine your victim, and that the business is in progress on the top of a high tree. It is a crow Supreme Court of Judicature, and only two methods of procedure are known to it: if the rag can be pecked off, the committee crows remove it; if it can't, they lose their tempers, swear that the rag-adorned crow has himself to blame for his misfortune, and kill him out of hand. This done, the meeting, which has hovered in waiting, bursts forth in votes of still more vociferous censure, and breaks up. Then you venture forth, feeling like a man who has passed through an Indian thunder-storm and an earthquake rolled into one.

I have already mentioned the crow's taste for young birds; and there is in this nothing very remarkable. A half-fledged sparrow is a tender and succulent morsel no carnivorous bird need despise. But what, in the name of gastronomy,

is there to recommend the scorpion as an article of diet, even to the depraved appetite of a crow? And yet his fondness for this ugly reptile amounts to a passion. If you see half-a-dozen crows standing silently in a circle on the road, you may be sure there is a scorpion in the middle, lashing out on all sides with that dangerous curved spur which forms the extremity of his tail. Stand still and watch the one-sided strife. One crow takes his place in front of the reptile, to engage his attention; the rest hop round, seizing every opportunity of giving the ever-moving tail a vicious dig. The scorpion is scaly and tough, and surprisingly active, so it takes some time to disarm him; but his strokes grow fainter and fewer, and the crows' digs harder and more frequent. At last a well-aimed peck strikes home between the overlapping armour, and the tail is severed. It's all over; as the spur and its underlying sac of poison fall off, every beak closes on some portion of the scorpion's anatomy, and a tug of war ensues, 'all against all'; it is torn to pieces and swallowed on the spot.

I saw, early one morning, a very curious contest between a number of crows and a bandicoot rat. The rat had obviously been out all night, and was making his way home along a shallow open drain, when the crows caught sight of him. He was a sorry specimen of his kind; mangy and decrepit, so the crows 'went for him.' A bandicoot's teeth are long and sharp, and the birds were not inclined to come to close quarters in the open; they formed up in single file on either edge of the drain, and escorted the now hurrying rat till he reached his hole. Then they began operations; the instant the bandicoot's head disappeared they fell upon him pell-mell, and drove their iron bills into every tender spot they could reach, while one of the flock held on to his tail, seemingly bent on dragging the owner out. Whether the strain on his caudal appendage overcame him, or whether prompted by motives of vengeance, I cannot say, but after a few seconds' struggle, the bandicoot backed out and snapped fiercely at his foes, who retreated a step or two and waited. The crow at his tail was the first to retire; and giving it a defiant waggle, to make sure it was free, the rat made another rush for his burrow. The very moment his head was out of sight, a crow pounced upon his tail again, and the others resumed the attack, drawing blood at every peck. I began to understand the *modus operandi*, and grew interested: the crows' plan of action, in detail, was to assault only when the rat could not bite back; and the general idea to worry him until he succumbed to exhaustion and weakness. It took the birds just twelve minutes to achieve a victory; the bandicoot grew weary, and presently the crows confined themselves to simply dragging him out whenever he got half-way into his hole. As soon as it appeared safe, they pounced upon him *en masse*, pecked out his eyes, and literally stabbed him to death. Then, in half the time it had taken to kill him, they ate him and flew away happy.

People who don't know the crow may find difficulty in believing the following anecdote, though Anglo-Indians will accept it without hesitation. A dog of my acquaintance—a fox

terrier of long Eastern experience—was one morning eating a chicken-bone on the veranda, when two crows happened to pass, and, observing the dog and his bone, wheeled down and alighted on the veranda railing, whence they set to work croaking to induce him to drop his breakfast. Under ordinary circumstances, an English dog will fly at a crow the moment he appears; but on this occasion 'Jack' simply looked up, growled, and continued gnawing. The crows ceased croaking, and consulted together for a moment; then one of the pair dropped into the veranda a few yards behind the dog and croaked at him again; once more obtaining no answer but a growl. After strolling casually round the veranda for a minute, to let Jack settle down, the bird hopped up silently and swiftly and gave the dog's tail a cruel nip. That was too much; with a howl of pain, Jack turned upon his tormentor, and crow No. 2, who had been patiently awaiting this opportunity, swooped down upon the bone and carried it off. You never saw a dog wear a look of such abject humiliation as did Jack when he recognised how he had been fooled.

When Nature organised her great scheme of administration, she appointed the crow to the Sanitary Department, with the jackal, pariah, vulture, and kite. These four are conscientious and painstaking officials, whose utility no one denies; but after all I have said about the crow, it seems idle to add that he never does any work, or only when it happens to suit his private ends. So far his chief purpose has been to supply us with a synonym for wickedness and cunning, and our servants with a scapegoat; but he is scarcely worth preserving for these uses. Not that he stands in need of preservation or in any way owes his flourishing condition to protective effort on the part of man. He is only too well able to take care of himself; indeed, if there be anything in the doctrine of the 'survival of the fittest,' a time should come when the crow, and the crow only, will populate the world.

TWO LITTLE FEET.

Oh life, so prodigal of life!
 Oh love and destiny at strife!
 Oh earth, so full of busy feet!
 Oh woods and hills and all things sweet!
 Was there no room amidst you all
 For two more feet, so soft and small?
 Didst envy me, where thousands sing,
 The one bird that made all my Spring,
 My dove, that had so many ways
 Of making beautiful life's days?
 No room! Or rather it may be
 Earth was too small 't' imprison thee.
 God only knows. I know I miss
 Thy sweet caress, thy loving kiss,
 The patter of thy dear small feet,
 Thy hand in mine through lane and street;
 While all that now remains to me
 Is just a precious memory.
 Two little feet 'neath earth's brown sod,
 Two white wings somewhere safe with God.

Laura Harvey.

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